

Headlines

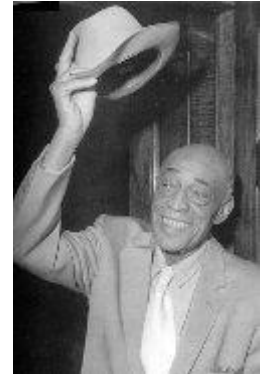


Celebrate Tim Moore Day at the Library

July 1, 2008

July 16 Event Honors a Rock Island Entertainment Pioneer

The Quad Cities African American Museum, of Rock Island, will sponsor a day to honor and recognize the achievements of vaudeville and TV actor Tim Moore on July 16 at the Rock Island Public Library. Moore, who was born and brought up in Rock Island, became widely known as “Kingfish” in the television version of “Amos n’ Andy.”



The drop-in event is from 10 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. in the Rock Island Public Library’s Community Room, 401 19th Street, Rock Island. The event is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be available.

The daylong program will include a selection of Moore’s most popular television shows and a display of memorabilia and photographs. A history of his life and times will be available, along with books about the making of the “Amos n’ Andy” radio shows that preceded the famous CBS TV series of the same name. At 5:30 p.m., relatives and friends of the family will discuss their personal memories of Tim Moore, followed by an original poem Shellie Guy a relative and a storyteller, poet and actor will give a special presentation in the evening.

The Quad Cities African American Museum was incorporated in March this year. The proposed museum will exhibit the works of local and regional African American actors, musicians, writers, artists, educators and other professionals who have contributed their talents to the Quad City region’s communities.

Harry Roscoe "Tim" Moore was the son of Harry and Cynthia Moore. He began his show business career as a youngster, earning nickels and dimes shuffling and singing for the people standing in line at Douglas Park as his friends whistled “Turkey in the Straw.” He would also entertain passersby on street corners.

At the age of 12, Moore and partner Romeo Washburn left Rock Island to join a vaudeville troupe, appearing in an act called Cora Miskel and Her Gold Dust Twins. Moore’s talents and his skills soon took him to the British music halls. Returning to the States, he joined a medicine show that played vacant lots all over the Midwest.

His varied career included a stint as a carnival "geek," and in Hawaii he posed as a native tour guide, taking carloads of tourists around Oahu. At 15, he returned home and worked as a fly-

shoer in a stable and as a fight manager. He eventually toured as a professional boxer named "Young Klondike," earning \$110,000 and winning 84 out of 104 fights.

In the 1920s, Moore teamed up with Mantan Moreland, working in the musical revue *Blackbirds of 1928*. Moore appeared in a number of black musical revues over a period of 15 to 20 years, including *Fast and Furious*, *Take the Air*, *Shuffle Along*, *Harlem Scandals* and *Rhapsody in Black*. He also appeared on the Westinghouse radio series program in 1934.

Moore wrote nearly all of his own material as well as skits for other performers. W. C. Fields bought one of his sketches, "Not a Fit Night for Man nor Beast." Some of Moore's films include *His Great Chance* in 1923, *Darktown Revue* by Oscar Micheaux Films in 1931, and the *Donald Heywood Choir* in 1950.

He made some appearances on Ed Sullivan's "Toast of the Town" television program and appeared at the Apollo Theatre. Moore had already been in show business for 50 years when he was chosen to play the role of George "Kingfish" Stevens in the television version of the wildly popular "Amos 'n' Andy" radio show. The show ran on CBS from June 28, 1951 through June 11, 1953. The Amos 'n' Andy Show was the 13th highest rated show during its first year on the air. For that same season, the top-rated show was Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts.

Tim Moore died of pulmonary tuberculosis in Los Angeles in December 1958, four days after his seventy-first birthday.